College conferences don't all agree on how to nominate a champion. Should we have a playoff, or just determine our champion from the league table? How about a one-off championship game? And how do we determine our standings?

In some cases, leagues answer those questions based largely on the size and makeup of their conferences. Conferences like the WIIL and NY Upstate, which are large and/or split into divisions, opted for a playoff. Makes some sense, since not everyone gets to play everyone in the regular season, but why not just have a championship between the division champs?

The Potomac has a playoff, too. That league has two tiers of competition, with the winner of the bottom tier winning a spot in the quarterfinals. The other seven spots are taken by teams from the top tier. Kind of makes sense to do it that way, but why not just have the lower tier teams compete in NSCRO? After all, Salisbury ended up having to beat teams it had already beaten in the regular season in the Potomac's semifinals and finals.

So playoffs in a league where everyone plays everyone are kind of redundant. But when the league plays its regular season in the fall and Nationals are in the spring, some argue that a playoff in the spring allows the best team in the semester of the actual championship to move on. Some students do graduate, leave school or become ineligible in December, too.

Rugby Northeast has a championship game, but with teams who already met in the regular season playing again to decide who gets an automatic bid to Nationals. Providence won the regular season meeting with Holy Cross 25-24, but it was at home. For the championship game, Holy Cross and Providence will meet at a neutral site in Easton, Mass. It works out well this season, as the championship game takes away home-field advantage which could well explain a one-point difference in the regular season. But what if the top team in the regular season is undefeated and the second-place team has three losses?

Maybe the biggest bone of contention when it comes to determining a champion is whether to

use the Super Rugby point system, which most leagues do, or to opt for something more American, like the ACRL and Rugby Northeast employ. In those two leagues, they shun the points system and use win percentage as the predominant criterion, a la football and basketball conferences.

This can make a huge difference when it comes to teams qualifying for the postseason, and there's a glaring example in DI-AA this season.

Boston College and Middlebury both finished 6-1 in the East Coast Rugby Conference, with Boston College beating Middlebury in the regular season head-to-head bout. But Middlebury won the league with more bonus points, so the Panthers get an automatic bid to the Sweet 16, while BC is left hoping for an at-large bid. In the ACRL, Boston College would have been crowned champion via the head-to-head tiebreaker.

Food for thought.